

First lesson

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

The opening module of this paper deals with what is Sociology through the idea of different sociologists, and its nature and scope. Besides this what is sociological imagination and how it helps to mould sociological outlook. The module refers sociology and commonsense how these are different from each other, it is an inevitable part of this paper because sociology studies the commonsense concepts applying the scientific methods. Family, marriage, religion, political institutions, economic institutions etc. are important social institutions those are the basic concept of sociology its characteristics and significance are analysed in this module. The module provides a basic idea about sociology and its scientificity .

1.1 Sociology: Definition, Nature and Scope

Sociology is a branch of social science that deals with society. Social relationships are the subject matter of sociology. Sociology is a new science developed only in 19th century. Even though it is a youngest science its scope is extremely wide. Man and society and their relationship are the specific area of study. Sociology which had once been treated as social philosophy or the philosophy of history emerged as an independent social science in the 19th century in France. Auguste Comte, a French philosopher is popularly known as the founding father of Sociology. Comte is accredited with the coining of the term sociology in 1839. The term sociology is composition of two words like Latin word socius means companion and Greek word logos meaning science or study. Sociology has been defined in a number of ways by different sociologists. The definitions of different sociologists are cited below; Definition □ Auguste Comte a French Philosopher who defines “sociology as the science of social phenomena subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation.”

□ Max Weber a German Philosopher defined “sociology as a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects.”

□ Emile Durkheim was French philosopher and one of an important classical social thinker defines “sociology as the science of social institutions.”

Different sociologists differently defined sociology. It is evident that the sociologists differ in their opinion about sociology. However the common idea underlying all the definitions mentioned above is that sociology is

concerned with social institutions, man and his actions. Various sociologists defined sociology on the basis of subject matter. Auguste Comte displays social phenomena as the subject matter, but Weber identified social action as the subject matter and Durkheim's view is different from both of these sociologists. For him sociology is the scientific study of social institutions.

2nd lesson

Nature of Sociology

Each and every subject has a specific nature, which simply means the underlying characteristics. Sociology as a branch of knowledge it has its own unique characteristics. It is different from other sciences in certain respects.

Robert Bierstedt (1913-1998) an American Sociologist discussed the characteristics of sociology in his well known book entitled as *The Social Order: An Introduction to Sociology* (1957). Following are the main characteristics of sociology enlisted by Bierstedt

1. Sociology is an independent science: Sociology is not treated and studied as a branch of any other science like philosophy, history etc. and it has its own field of study, boundary and method so it is an independent science.
2. Sociology is a social science not a physical science: Sociology belongs to the category of social science not physical science. As a social science its major attention is on man, social behavior, social activities and a social life. As a social science Sociology is intimately related to other social sciences like History, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Anthropology etc. Specifically Sociology deals with the social universe which distinguishes from Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry and other physical sciences.
3. Sociology is a categorical and not a normative science: Sociology explains about different categories, positive and negative, good and bad, right and wrong etc. Norms are the expected modes of behavior based on social values, Sociology studies these norms but not support it. Hence it is categorical but not normative. As science Sociology do not make any kind of value judgments. Sociology is ethically neutral, and never deals with the problems of good and evil, right and wrong. Its approach is neither moral nor immoral but amoral. Sociology deals with values and norms as the 6 bases of social order that constitute social structure. Sociology is a science its knowledge is scientific not emotional.
4. Sociology is a pure science not an applied science: Commonly science is broadly classified into pure and applied. Pure science mainly seeks to the acquisition of knowledge they haven't any application but applied science is mainly concentrates its knowledge more on the application in different contexts than acquisition of knowledge. Sociology is not an applied science.

5. Sociology is relatively an abstract science and not a concrete science: Sociology mainly observes and studies social phenomena, which are abstract in nature. The very subject matter of Sociology is society so it is abstract, whereby Sociology as a discipline studies social relationships, social structure, social system and so on. The subject is more concerned with the forms of human relationships and their pattern, which are absolutely abstract in nature. Because of the nature of the subject matter, the Sociology becomes an abstract science.

6. Sociology is a generalising and not a particularising science: Sociology tries to find out the general laws or principles about human interaction and association about the nature, form, content and structure of human groups and societies. It does not study each and every event that takes place in society in isolation. It tries to make generalizations on the basis of the study of some selected events.

7. Sociology is a general science not a special social science: General science means a branch of knowledge constituted by the combination of different subjects like Economics, Political Science, History, Sociology etc. But special science is the opposite of general science. Special science concentrates its enquiry on specific aspects of knowledge, for example Political Science deals with political aspects of society, Economics deals with the economic aspects of society. Sociology studies human society as a whole in this sense sociology is a general science.

8. Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science: Rationalism and empiricism are the two broad approaches of scientific knowledge. The empiricists emphasized that the experiences and facts that result from observation and experimentation. Simply they conceptualizes that all knowledge is derived from senses that means experiences. Rationalists' stresses on reason and theories that result from the logical inferences. In this way Sociology makes use of the methods of rational and empirical sciences. Therefore Sociology could be treated as both rational and empirical science.

Sociology is a science so its nature is scientific and above mentioned features are assure the scientific nature of the subject.

3rd lesson

Scope of Sociology

Sociology is a social science which deals with the social institutions, social interactions, social behavior etc. Since the dawn of civilization society has been a subject for speculation and enquiry. Even centuries ago men were thinking about society and how it should be organized. Though thoughts and discussions were in sociological terms they were called philosophers, historians, thinkers, law givers etc. Sociology came to be established as a separate discipline in the 19th century by the efforts of French Philosopher Auguste Comte. But there is no unanimous agreement among the scholars about the scope of sociology is wide. The scope of a subject mainly determined on the basis of its area of study and the uses of it in people's life. The scope of sociology explained by philosophers based on separate ideas that constitute two schools of thought such as specialistic or formalistic school and synthetic school that are briefly explain below.

Specialistic or Formalistic School It is the first school explains about the scope of sociology on the basis of area of study. Advocates of the specialistic school opined that sociology has a limited scope. German Sociologists are the main advocators of the formalistic school. George Simmel (1858-1918) a prominent German Philosopher and sociologist who headed and who supported the formalistic school's view that sociology is a pure and independent science. He summarized that sociology is a specific science which deals with the forms of social interaction than its content, the content analyzed by other social sciences. Sociology deals with the forms of social relationships and activities than the relationships themselves. Alfred Vierkandt (1867-1953) a German Sociologist opines that sociology is a special branch of knowledge which deals with the ultimate forms of mental or psychic relationship which link men to one another in society. Love, hate, cooperation etc. are examples of mental relationships which shape particular type of social relationships. If sociology refrains from the historic study of concrete societies, Sociology becomes a definite science. Since the subject matter of sociology confined in the forms of mental or psychic relationships the scope of sociology is limited. Leopold Vonwiese (1876-1969) another German Sociologist included in formalistic school who opined that owing to sociology confined its' area of study on the forms of social relationships and social processes the scope of sociology is limited. He divided the social 8 relationships and social processes into different types. According to him there are two social processes in society such as

associative and dissociative. Cooperation, accommodation, assimilation are important associative social process whereas competition and conflict are the commonly exist as forms of dissociative social process. Max Weber (1864-1920), a well known German Sociologist supports the view of formalistic school that the scope of sociology is very limited. Because of sociology concentrates its area of analysis on the interpretative understanding of social action and social behavior, sociology should confine itself in the analysis and classification of social action and social behavior. Ferdinand Tonnies a popular German Sociologist opines that sociology studies the forms of social relationship and it deeply analyses all process, phenomena and institutions under the head of the forms of social relationships. Gemeinschaft (German word meaning society) and Gessellschaft (German Word means community) is the differentiation of social group made by Tonnies.

4th lesson

Synthetic School It is another perception of philosophers on the scope of sociology on the basis of the area of study; it developed as a criticism of specialistic school. This school opined that the scope of sociology is wide. Like its name the school of thought states that sociology is the synthesis of social sciences. The school also argued that sociology is a general science. Important thinkers comes under synthetic school are L T Hobhouse, P A Sorokin, Morris Ginsberg and Karl Mannheim, their contributions are summed up below. Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse (1864-1929) an English liberal political theorist and sociologist, popularly known as Hobhouse who opined that sociology is the synthesis of social sciences but sociologists has some special tasks which are given below.

- (1) One must pursue his studies in his particular part of the social field.
- (2) Keeping in mind the interconnections of social relations one should try to interconnect the result arrived at by different social sciences.
- (3) Sociologists should interpret social life as a whole. Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin (1889-1968) a Russian born American sociologist, popularly known as P A Sorokin opines that sociology studies different aspects of social relationship so cannot call it as special science. According to him the area of study of sociology includes the study of general features of social phenomena and their relationship with various aspects of social phenomena and study the relationship between social and non social aspects. Morris Ginsberg (1889-1970) a British sociologist, according to him sociology studies and classifies all forms of social relationships, it also analyses the

relationship between individual and society. He divides the area of study of sociology into three which constitutes the scope of sociology.

1. Social Morphology
2. Social control
3. Social process
4. Social pathology

Social morphology studies the quality and quantity of population, social groups, social structure and social institutions. The another area of study social control analyses formal and informal control mechanisms existing in society for control the behavior of members. Social process is the third branch of area of study it studies different types of interaction like cooperation, competition and conflict. Social pathology studies the social problems such as poverty, crime etc. Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) a well knew German Sociologist, who divides the area of study of sociology into two branches. Among those first branch is systematic and general sociology and the second is historical sociology. The first branch deals with the main factors of living together and the second branch studies the historical variety and actuality of the general forms of society. Comparative sociology and social dynamics are the two sections constituted the historical sociology.

5th lesson

Types of Social Institutions

Social institutions are classified into primary institutions and secondary institutions on the basis of the nature and characteristics of them. Primary institutions are the most basic type, which helps to fulfill our basic needs like food, clothing and shelter. Family, marriage, kinship, religion etc are important examples of primary institution. Secondary institutions are another type of social institutions which helps to fulfill the secondary needs like education entertainment, economic needs. It is mainly support the primary institutions for the fulfillment of the primary needs. Economy, political institutions, education etc. are the major secondary institutions commonly found in society. Certain important primary and secondary institutions are briefly explain below.

Family

Family is a basic social institution existing in all periods of history. Family simply means a social group consisting of husband, wife and their children. The term family derived from Latin word famulus meaning servant. Family is a group of persons defined by sexual relations, and the people in it are related through the ties of marriage and blood. Family is a social unit as well as a biological unit.

Functions of Family

Family is a small social unit composed by husband wife and their children. Family has certain characteristics like universality, nuclear position, social regulation, emotional basis; limited size etc. sociologists opined that family has certain functions to maintain society. MacIver, Ogburn and Nimcoff well known sociologists who conceptualized the functions of family. The important functions of family are given below;

1. Affection
2. Recreational
3. Religious
4. Educational
5. Economic.

Marriage

Marriage is a type of primary social institution. It is a universal social institution established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of man. It is closely connected with the institution of family. Regulation of sexual life is the prime function of marriage, through which facilitate social control.

Economic Institution

Economic institutions constitute the economic system. System means a structure or complex whole of interrelated elements. Production, distribution and consumption are the economic activities, which is operated through the economic institutions like property, wage, division of labour, work etc.

Political Institutions

Institutions are the established form of rules and norms, and it is the building blocks of society. Political institutions are the structural elements of political system. It simply means the organizations in a government which create enforce and apply laws. The rules and regulations are commonly found in every society for control the behaviour of individuals. In primitive societies the control system is informal but in modern society the regulating agencies are formal